Preparing for your Gastric Emptying Scan

The gastric emptying scan is a test to look at how quickly food leaves your stomach. Read this handout to learn what to expect before and during the test.

Check in Date and Time:

_____.

Getting Ready

Diet
Do not eat or drink any food or liquids for 6 hours before your check-in time.

Smoking
If you smoke, **do not** smoke the morning of the test.

Pregnancy
If you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant or breast feeding, please tell us. This test should not be done if you are pregnant or breast-feeding except under special conditions.

Medicines
A pharmacist will review your medicines. If needed they will contact your doctor. Your doctor may ask you to stop taking some medicines 2 days before the test. Talk to your doctor to see if you can take other medicines with a sip of water the day of the test. Take these at least 2 hours before you arrive at the hospital for the test.

Do not take any laxatives the day before or the day of the test.

Some medicines can affect how quickly food moves through your stomach, These may include:

- Reglan® (metoclopramide)
- Motilium® (domperidone)
- Bentyl® (dicyclomine)
- Donnatal®
- Zelnorm® (tegaserod)
- Erythromycin
- Pain medicines
    - Codeine
    - Percocet® (oxycodone)
    - Tylenol® #3
    - OxyContin®
    - Percodan®
    - Vicodin® (hydrocodone)
    - Ultram® (tramadol)
    - Fentanyl patch
    - Methadone

Diabetes and Weight Loss Medicines
You must call the doctor who prescribes this medicine to adjust your medicine before your surgery. That doctor will tell you how to safely do this.

If your doctor tells you not to stop your medicine, please call the procedure center.

During the Test
The test will take about 4-5 hours or about 2 ½ hours for infants.

You will be given a small meal of cooked egg whites, bread and water. The food you eat has a small amount of radioactive substance in it. The radioactive substance has no taste and the food tastes normal. If you have a confirmed allergy to eggs or wheat (gluten), tell us and a different meal will be provided for you.

After eating the meal, pictures will be taken of your stomach over the next 4 hours. You may be standing. If you cannot stand for 5 minutes, please let us know. You will be able to move around between the picture-taking. You may want to bring a book or something else to help pass the time. Do not eat or drink anything other than what we give you during the test.

Infants will have formula instead of the meal described. Pictures will be taken over a 2-hour period.

After the Test

You can return home and begin your regular diet and medicines.

Who to Call

If you have questions, please contact your provider through MyChart or call your provider listed in your After Visit Summary or After Hospital Care Plan. For a list of UW Health Clinics, visit www.uwhealth.org/.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7870.